Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT

FOR THE

STATE BASIC GRANT AND TECH-PREP GRANT PROGRAMS

Under the

CARL D. PERKINS VOCATIONAL

AND

TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACT OF 1998

2002 - 2003

Submitted to the

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
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Alaska Narrative for the Consolidated Annual Performance Report

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SECTION B

THE NARRATIVE REPORT FOR THE CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT

Executive Summary

A brief one or two sentence description of each of the following sections including the responses to the accountability questions listed on the accountability data collection forms.

- *What is the state definition of threshold level of vocational education for the minimal threshold level for the Core Indicators (vocational concentrators)?*
- *What is/are the baselines, by years, for each of your subindicators?*
- *How does the state define a Tech Prep student?*

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED) operated according to its approved State Plan for the program year 2002-2003 under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 (Perkins III). Improvements were implemented at the state and local levels for standards-based programs and for data collection procedures; related training was provided for both areas. Connections with the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB), state level business/industry careers consortia and the University of Alaska system were strengthened. Work continued to refine the definitions and data collection partnerships at the postsecondary level.

Local districts and institutions are very aware of the need for timely revision of their programs' curricula to become standards-based in both academic and vocational areas. Few programs are confident with their internal capacity to accomplish this task without significant external assistance. Capacity building continued to be needed to identify appropriate standards, develop curriculum, adopt standards-based instruction and student assessment strategies and conduct useful program evaluations. EED has been actively fostering partnerships within the state to build these capacities.

The following definitions were included in the State Plan that was submitted in April 2000, and were used to collect data for the 2002-2003 program year. Postsecondary definitions were revised at meetings in March 2001, and the state began collecting data based on the new definitions in last year's report. At times the postsecondary definitions have required operational definitions and this will be indicated where applicable. Baseline data was identified through a special data collection that aggregated and reported 1998-1999 data according to the Perkins III definitions and procedures.

Secondary Vocational Concentrator (Students Meeting Threshold) - Has taken (i.e. may pass or fail) 2 or more vocational education courses within an approved sequence in one of the specific career areas as defined by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE/USED).

Postsecondary Vocational Concentrator (Students Meeting Threshold) – A participant who has been admitted into a certificate or degree program, or has completed at least 12 vocational credit hours of the course/program of study toward a certificate or associate degree, or has completed all coursework needed to qualify for a third-party, industry recognized credential (*i.e.,* not awarded by the postsecondary institution), as established by the postsecondary institution.
Because the process for tracking all credentialing programs within the University system is not yet in place, we are counting all vocational participants with nine credits, vocational and/or academic, during the reporting year, as the best means to approximate the intent of the definition.

Baseline data was developed by applying the approved definitions and data collection protocols to student and program data from the 1998-1999 program year for core indicators 1, 2, 4 and 3-postsecondary.

A tech-prep student is a concentrator in a vocational & technical program that includes a formal articulation agreement between the secondary school or district and the postsecondary or apprenticeship entities.

I. Program Administration [Section 122 (c)]

a. Report on State Administration (roles/responsibility summary)

Administrative support and technical assistance during the 2002-2003 program year was focused on two goals: review and alignment of local programs with state academic and national industry standards, and capacity building for data collection and reporting.

Identification of and Alignment to Appropriate Standards

School districts completed their review of local career & technical education programs and alignment of programs with accepted industry standards as well as the applicable state required performance standards for reading, writing and math, and other recommended state standards for other content areas, employability and culture. Program and course descriptions were submitted to EED for approval.

Data Collection and Reporting

A major emphasis during this program year was continuing work with the local school districts, the University of Alaska system, and the Research and Analysis Section of Alaska's Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DOL) to assess progress on the state's new procedures that were developed to collect and report the data needed for the Perkins indicators, including new definitions and strategies, and make necessary adjustments to improve validity and reliability. A multi-part system continues to emerge.

Working together with local district personnel, a new electronic secondary data collection form was developed and used by all but two school districts. The new form reported the needed data on a per pupil basis rather in aggregate. This information was subjected to edit checks by EED personnel and then entered into a web-based aggregate reporting form. Local district personnel were given user names and passwords to access their aggregate report, and complete their data analysis. Twenty-one districts accepted the offer to have their core indicator #3 data collected by the Research & Analysis Section of the DOL through a record exchange.

Various forms of technical assistance for local data collection and reporting were provided throughout the year. Secondary data collection workshops were held in September for local vocational coordinators and their data support people to explain the reporting requirements and provide personalized assistance when necessary. All participants were encouraged to correct any previous year's reporting errors, and to improve their system for the current year's reporting.

The postsecondary data system is based upon a centralized collection of data by the University of Alaska system that is combined at EED and at DOL with data submitted by one non-University vocational and technical institution. Record sharing with the DOL is utilized to gather placement, retention, and special populations data. Continued meetings, both telephonic and in person, among the agency personnel have improved process and data validity.

The decision to acquire postsecondary data through the centralized University data system made sense initially, but has proven to be problematic. It has proven to be very difficult to collect information that is not part of the UA system. Special populations data is for the most part is not accessible, and brainstorming sessions have not found a means to overcome this dilemma. Consequently, for all measures, special populations data is incomplete.

Another major difficulty is that vocational students who are seeking an industry recognized certification or credential, but not a University degree or one-year certificate, are not tracked by the University data system. A method to track such students through a course selection filter has been discussed but the University has not completed the process necessary to develop it. According to some campus directors, the number of students seeking only credentials

constitutes the vast majority of vocational students on their campuses. Our definitions of concentrators and completers ambitiously incorporated credential seeking and achieving students, but the data system has not been able to measure this. A recent vocational education report indicated that the University is working on its capability to track "Departmental certificates" which would capture a significant number of these students. (These are separate from and lesser than the one-year certificates in Board approved University Programs.)

Although elements of a system to collect and report vocational and technical education data are in place, developing and implementing smooth working procedures among the various agencies and programs continues to require considerable time for oversight. Changes in local district staff and their multiple program responsibilities result in a continuing cohort of late or unreliable data submissions that must be corrected. At the state level, the professionals who are responsible for the different systems are very competent and cooperative, but must work around their primary responsibilities to help assure the data that is collected for this report is valid, reliable and timely.

Other Administrative Items

Timely communication continued to be a challenge in Alaska. In order to communicate effectively with the field and encourage useful feedback, a variety of communication methods were refined and continued. A periodic *Career & Technical Education News Bulletin* was e-mailed or faxed to all local program coordinators and other interested parties. A list serve was continued to simplify this method of communication with local program coordinators. A program support website has been expanded and a series of statewide audioconferences were held to answer questions and obtain feedback. The statewide local coordinator's worksession was continued and integrated both secondary and postsecondary institutions. E-mails and phone calls continued to be the preferred method of communication with individuals.

Coordination with other workforce development programs within the state continued during this program year. The EED funded a position at the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) to oversee the Perkins postsecondary grants and to coordinate with the EED in the support of career & technical education in the state. This has resulted in a closer exchange of information between the two agencies. EED staff also worked closely with staff from the industry careers consortia, particularly those for health care, process industries, and construction, to identify programs, curricula and resources for incorporation into secondary programs and articulation to postsecondary levels. Coordination with the University has continued with additional courses being articulated with secondary programs and offered for dual credit.

In an era of reduced staff and multiple responsibilities, EED has continued to search for procedures and mechanisms that result in simplification of the administrative tasks required of state and local agencies while maintaining accountability. EED continued to use a combined format for the local funding application and annual reporting form. Staff review of the applications and the reports was aggregated to assess the effectiveness of these technical assistance efforts and identify future needs.

b. Report on State Leadership. [Section 124]

1. Required Activities

i. *Assessment of vocational & technical education programs carried out with funds under this title that includes an assessment of how the needs of special populations are being met.* – Implementation of high quality local secondary vocational & technical education programs continued to be challenging during this report year. Districts completed their alignment of local curriculum to industry standards as well as state content, employability and cultural standards.

At one time, most districts employed a curriculum specialist and/or a vocational & technical education coordinator but few remain due to declining budgets in the past ten years. In most instances, vocational teachers conducted the curriculum review and development process; a few districts hired a consultant to complete this task. Annual updates to local CTE plans did not indicate, however, how districts were planning to support the changes that had been identified in the revised curriculum. A question was inserted into the annual report to require districts assess the capacity of their staff to provide the updated curriculum. However, the responses were marginally useful for statewide planning purposes.

The needs of special education students are monitored through the I.E.P. process and most students are placed in the least restrictive environment. The needs of economically disadvantaged students are handled through fee waivers and/or other assistance. Annual data reports are being monitored for indicators that vocational & technical students are succeeding, but are not yet of the quality to be used for this purpose.

ii. *Developing, improving, or expanding the use of technology in vocational and technical education* – IT continues to be identified as one of the four areas of employee shortage in Alaska, and 13 districts are offering IT programs leading to Cisco or CompTIA certifications. All districts offer computer applications, most leading to MOS or Apple certifications and CAD programs are continuously updated to include the latest technology. In addition, construction and transportation programs are increasingly desirable. Districts are highly motivated to teach electronic technology components as they work to reflect the industry standards in their area.

Vocational education has benefited from the general technology planning and upgrading that has occurred across the state. Alaska ranks at or near the top in all areas reported in the last Technology Counts™, including access to computers by students and daily use by teachers. Thanks to the e-rate, all schools have internet access, including very small rural schools, although the connection may be slow as access to high speed bandwidth is not available.

iii. *Professional development programs* – A primary goal of Alaska's State Plan is to develop a partnership of clients and providers to develop and implement a state level system of sustained professional development that is results and standards-based. Working with local secondary and postsecondary partners, training can be provided through distance delivery, peer coaching, and industry internships as well as the more traditional postsecondary coursework and intensive institutes.

During this program year, professional development providers worked together to develop a coordinated catalog of summer offerings. The Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center (AVTEC) produced the catalog as well as a state-level teacher-training institute that addressed academic integration and industry standards for both instructors and students. The Mat-Su Borough School district coordinated a Construction Camp using NCCER standards for teams of construction teachers and math teachers with the assistance from many union training coordinators and the Associated General Contractors of Alaska.

iv. *Support for strengthening the academic, and vocational and technical, components of such vocational and technical education programs through the integration of academics with vocational and technical education to ensure learning in the core academic, and vocational and technical subjects* – Teachers are actively engaged in local curriculum revision to ensure that the local curriculum is aligned to the appropriate industry standards, the state's required student performance standards for reading, writing and math and the state's Employability Standards and Cultural Standards. In support of this

effort, the EED partners with the Mat-Su School District to conduct a third CTE Curriculum Crosswalking Institute to examine common curriculum areas and provide recommended models. Samples of these crosswalks are available on the EED website.

v. *Providing preparation for nontraditional training and employment* - Previous state efforts for non-traditional activities had limited success as the project had a very narrow focus. Activities that would have more of a statewide impact were sought. A Request for Proposals was put out soliciting proposals for projects that would promote and increase participation in non-traditional programs. Only one response was received to this RFP and after three readers reviewed it, it was decided that the proposal did not address the issues of non-traditional occupations and was therefore rejected.

After the unsuccessful RFP effort a broader search for non-traditional activities was sought. Communication was sent out to all other state Departments of Education to see what other states were doing. Many responses regarding materials used to promote non-traditional activities were received. The materials suggested most often was "The Road Less Traveled," a toolkit produced by MAVCC. These materials were obtained and reviewed. It was decided to use these materials in conjunction with an online distance delivery course. The California Department of Education has developed their own online course to accompany these materials and has offered to share their resources with us. Distribution of these materials is scheduled to occur in the following school year.

A second project that was considered would be a summer camp for girls to explore non-traditional careers. Contact was made with the organizers of the Rosie's Girls model out of Vermont. Plans were made to send two representatives from Alaska to attend the Train the Trainers in July of 2003.

Postsecondary efforts focused on efforts to increase retention and success of all students. This included inservices focusing on diverse learning styles and preferences and developing support programs for students needing remediation. On the state level, the Postsecondary Coordinator continued his involvement with industry led workforce development consortiums. These organizations focus on increasing recruitment of Alaskans to shortage professions, such as health care and construction. Materials developed to interest and recruit Alaskans by the Industry Skills Coalition, the Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association, and the Associated General Contractors are quite consciously designed to appeal to the underrepresented genders within the occupations. This is true also of recruitment by the University system and AVTEC.

vi. *Supporting partnerships among local education agencies, institutions of higher education, adult education providers, and other appropriate entities to enable students to achieve state academic standards, and vocational and technical skills* – State and local efforts toward building and improving partnerships have been a major theme for this reporting year. The University of Alaska Anchorage/Community & Technical College developed a standard protocol for articulation agreements and created a second Tech-Prep Coordinator position. As a result, the process for articulating programs between the secondary and postsecondary levels has become much more transparent, and the staff at both levels have become more involved in the development and maintenance of agreements. The EED's annual local coordinator's workshop focused on the potential, content, and process of articulation among the secondary and postsecondary levels. Evaluations indicated that participants were pleased with the opportunity to become better acquainted and work toward solving common issues and goals with their colleagues from other parts of the workforce development system.

Coordination with the AWIB (formerly AHRIC) has continued via an EED funded position at the state's AWIB office. This position has continued to work with the WIA youth

coordinator, educators, industry careers consortia, and Alaska Native training organizations to develop a youth employability skills program. Attendance at AWIB committee meetings, and industry careers consortium committee meetings has helped to foster the exchange of information within the workforce development system. The AWIB underwent reorganization this program year, which presented an opportunity for a fresh focus on the issues of vocational education and workforce development although it experienced the usual procedural bumps at first because of personnel and structural changes.

vii. *Serving individuals in state institutions* – During this reporting year, a pilot program in MOS certification and testing was begun at the Hiland Mountain Correctional Center. Two classrooms were upgraded, and a teacher received needed training. The center is now a certified MOS facility. By the end of this reporting year, 20 inmates completed 1985 hours of instruction although no inmates had completed the instructional sequence nor taken any certification tests. This pilot project is now fully functional and student progress will be evaluated during the next project year.

viii. *Support for programs for special populations that lead to high skill, high wage careers* – Enrollment information collected by career cluster indicates that special populations are represented proportionately in the major clusters leading to the four areas of need identified for Alaska: health care, transportation, construction and IT. During this reporting year, however, completers were not identified by cluster or program, so it is not possible to estimate completion rates within those clusters. Each eligible agency was required to describe measures to support successful participation of special populations in vocational education programs, including recruitment, retention, and academic and occupational skills training for high-skill, high-wage occupations. Technical assistance activities and annual report narratives imply the construction cluster has been successful in reaching special population students, but the data reported in this area is not of sufficient quality to document these statements.

2. Permissive Activities

ix. *Improvement of career guidance and academic counseling programs that assist students in making informed academic, and vocational and technical education, decisions* – A section dedicated to career development activities was included within the comprehensive counseling program guide. Components of this section include investigation of careers, career success, and relationship between school and work. Other sections of the guide address academic development activities and personal/social development activities. The guide is provided to new counselors and is available on-line, and a course was offered in the fall for new counselors in conjunction with the annual professional development conference.

The Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS) is utilized by schools, job centers, and NGOs in Alaska. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL) works with the National Career Information System (NCIS) at the University of Oregon to populate this software package of career guidance information and tools with Alaska-specific labor market information. The web-based version was enhanced this past year, making it quicker, easier to navigate, and more useful with features such as portfolios, resume writer, and occupational videos. It also was aligned with the 16 career clusters utilized in the state. Students on home computers also can now access it, which encourages more family involvement. Trainings in using the software were provided at multiple locations throughout the state.

x. *Support for vocational and technical student organizations, especially with respect to efforts to increase the participation of students who are members of special populations* – The EED provided financial support and technical assistance to the state's career and

technical student organizations (CTSOs), through a cooperative agreement with the University of Alaska Anchorage's Career & Technical College.

3. Core Indicator Related Activity

All state activities are related to one or more of the core indicators. The major goal of all activity is to provide the program and supportive services to students to enable them to meet industry and state academic standards upon completion of their vocational & technical education program. State staff is small in number and has become proficient at finding and nurturing partnerships with local secondary and postsecondary agencies and their experts and linking with other agencies and coalitions to promote and support these programs. Additional detail is provided in Section "d" of this report.

c. Implications for next fiscal year/State Plan

EED is committed to data-driven decision-making with data that is highly valid and reliable. Significant effort was made during this reporting year to improve data collection and aggregation at all levels and the effort will require continuing attention at all levels. The secondary level continues to need multiple training iterations because of the high turnover rate among responsible school district staff as well as the competing priorities for their time to assure standardized information is reported to the state. The training and coaching by EED staff combined with the new "All-In-One" secondary form appears to have improved the accuracy and timeliness of many local reports. However, there are still a few districts that continue to be challenged by accurate reporting and often didn't submit data in a timely fashion. EED will continue to provide reminders and technical assistance to encourage completion of this task by the end of the program year and will investigate other possible methods for insisting on timely reporting.

EED will continue to collaborate with local and regional partners to provide statewide professional development activities that support the industry and state standards identified in the revised vocational & technical education program curriculum. The increased capacity of teachers to support these standards will result in more students meeting industry certifications and credentials as well as passing the Alaska High School Qualifying Examination. In an effort to increase non-traditional completion various professional development opportunities for counselors and teachers are being explored.

II. Program Performance

Performance Accountability - Core Indicators [Section 113]
Special Populations [Section 122(c) (7), (8), (13), (17), (18)]
Tech Prep [Sections 204(c) and 205]
Fiscal Requirements [Sections 122(c)(10) and (11); and 122(c) (4) (A) and (B)]

a. State Performance Summary

Describe the state's performance results compared to negotiated performance levels and comparable performance results including special populations and Tech Prep. Describe reasons for not meeting levels for each core subindicator. Also, describe major challenges or reasons for special populations not reaching performance levels of vocational concentrators for all applicable core subindicators. If you failed to meet the agreed upon performance levels for the preceding year provide a copy of the State improvement plan. [Sec 123]

General Comments:

The State of Alaska and its subgrantees continue to refine the collection and reporting of valid and reliable Perkins data during this reporting year. Information leading to these

changes is collected during local CTE coordinators' worksessions and during on-site monitoring visits.

Alaska's secondary schools are required to have adopted local data collection definitions that were congruent with the minimum requirements of EED's approved definitions; they may be more rigorous. These definitions are described in the local annual reports, and included in the edit checks performed by EED staff. Despite the training that has been provided, the consistency with which local procedures result in data that meet state definitions has been found to be of uneven quality. The numerous duties most federal programs coordinators are assigned to perform and the high turnover in many rural districts compound the problem. The tasks of development, maintenance, and operation of accurate databases at the local and state levels are an on-going challenge.

The postsecondary data collection is the result of continuous involvement from a three-agency cooperative effort that includes the EED, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL) Research and Analysis Section (R&A), and the University of Alaska (UA) Statewide Budget & Institutional Research.

1S1 – Academic Achievement

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
65.33%	67.33%	82.13%	E

Discussion: N/A

1S2 – Vocational Achievement

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
66.63%	68.63%	71.21%	E

Discussion: N/A

2S1 – Diploma

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
70.96%	72.96%	86.01%	E

Discussion: N/A

3S1 – Placement

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
94.62%	90.00%	82.99%	D

Discussion: Twenty districts submitted lists of student completers and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development used administrative data to determine placement rate for employment and postsecondary education. Wage records or postsecondary enrollment were found for a 70.18% response rate for employment, and a 48.02% response rate for postsecondary placement.

However, the negotiated performance level is based on a number and percentage that was collected through 5-year graduation follow-up surveys. It has since been learned that the difference in timeframe following graduation has a significant difference on the results. Two years of reliable data now exists, and an adjusted target level will be requested.

The EED expects to experience increasing difficulty in collecting Social Security Numbers (SSNs) for use in matching with the U.I. and the postsecondary education systems. The EED has discontinued use of SSNs and developed an alternate system of unique student identifiers for its general data collection including academic assessment. Therefore, all K-

12 student records will not include the student's Social Security Number. No efficient solution for this pending problem has been found.

4S1 – Nontraditional participation

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
30.23%	31.73%	31.91%	E

Discussion: N/A

4S2 – Nontraditional completion

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
14.27%	15.77%	26.01%	E

Discussion: N/A

1P1 – Academic Achievement

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
8.34%	11.34%	43.98%	E

Discussion: See the discussion under "c" below.

1P2 – Vocational Achievement

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
90.68%	90.68%	11.65%	D

Discussion: An attempt to establish a method for determining the number of students who met the requirements for industry-based credentials has not been successful. Consequently, for the UA system, students are counted in this measure if they successfully complete nine credits of vocational coursework within the measurement year.

According to campus directors, a majority of vocational students are not degree seeking, but are seeking skill upgrades and/or credentials for their employment. As such, the majority of them do not declare to be part of a degree or certificate program. The University system has not developed a method for identifying such students by field or by educational objective.

The baseline for this measure is not based on reliable information and was set unrealistically high. It apparently included estimates of completion for short-term programs, which we in fact are not able to accurately measure and are not including in our current counts. This disparity means we are not able to meet our target.

A new baseline should be established in the upcoming negotiations based upon the data collected under Perkins III.

2P1 – Completion

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
5.98%	8.98%	14.26%	E

Discussion: As discussed above in 1P2, a method to count students who successfully complete the requirements that lead to a nationally recognized industry credential has proved overly ambitious and has not been implemented yet. This measure does include those who have attained a degree or one-year certificate. In an attempt to include some of those who pursue a credential rather than a degree, students who successfully complete at least 15 hours of vocational coursework within the measurement year are counted here, as an approximate attempt to capture credential-seeking students. Credential seeking students whose programs are relatively short are therefore not being counted, so our completion rate based on our definition is undercounted.

3P1 – Placement

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
77.00%	79.00%	78.56%	D

Discussion: As mentioned above, a multi-agency cooperative effort is involved in gathering the data for this report. The UA system sends its data, a list of the prior year completers, to the R&A section for matching to obtain placement and retention figures. After the R&A section performs its matching operations, the data is forwarded to the EED section where it is compiled into Excel tables for review by program managers and for report submission.

This report is just one of many responsibilities for the persons responsible for each link in this chain. As a result, delays occur in its compilation and transmission from one agency to the next. By the time the program managers get to see the reports, there is little time left before report submission.

In follow-up discussions to the submission of last year's report, it was discovered that the data match had been done for concentrators, not completers. The person submitting the data for the match had made this decision about what to send based on the judgment that the number of completers was so small. This has been the case for all of the CAR reports submitted. We decided this year to continue this count so the data would have year-to-year consistency.

There is no single explanatory factor for the failure to attain the negotiated performance level. In a state with high levels of seasonal employment, self-employment, and mobility, we may be reaching the upper limits of this measure.

3P2 – Retention

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
62.50%	64.50%	71.06%	E

Discussion: See 3P1 with regard to data collection.

4P1 – Nontraditional participation

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
31.41%	32.91%	36.94%	E

Discussion: N/A

4P2 – Nontraditional Completion

Baseline Level	Negotiated Performance Level	2002-2003 Performance Level	E-M-D
20.72%	22.22%	23.64%	E

Discussion: N/A

b. Definition of Vocational Concentrator and Tech Prep students

Provide a brief definition of vocational concentrator and Tech Prep student. Indicate whether this definition has changed from the previous program year.

Secondary Vocational Concentrator (Students Meeting Threshold) -
Has taken (i.e. may pass or fail) 2 or more vocational education courses within an approved sequence in one of the specific career areas as defined by USED.

Postsecondary Vocational Concentrator (Students Meeting Threshold) –
A Participant who has been admitted into a certificate or degree program, or has completed at least 12 vocational credit hours of the course/program of study toward a certificate or degree, or has

completed all coursework for an industry recognized credential (not awarded by the postsecondary institution), as established by the postsecondary institution.
Because the process for tracking all credentialing programs within the University system is not yet in place, we are counting all vocational students with 9 credits, vocational and/or academic, during the reporting year, as the best means to approximate the intent of the definition.

A tech-prep student is a concentrator in a vocational & technical program that includes a formal articulation agreement between the secondary school or district and the postsecondary or apprenticeship entity. Operationally, districts generally are counting students who complete a course that is articulated for concurrent credit or for pre-apprenticeship.

c. Measurement Approaches and Data Quality Improvement

Indicate the measurement approach(s) used for each of the subindicators. Indicate your state's assessment of the quality of the data using the indicated approaches and list the state activities to improve data quality.

Briefly describe these state efforts to improve data quality, especially for subindicators with low quality ratings.

A general note: During this reporting year, the EED worked with the local school districts to develop an improved mechanism for reporting Perkins data because the 16 page aggregate form was very burdensome for most school districts. The result, known as the "All-In-One" Perkins Data Form collects information about each individual student. This information is then sent to EED, edit checked, and posted on a web-based form that creates the aggregate data reports. Local district coordinators are given a user name and password to access their reports and complete their data analysis. EED staff has observed that the data reports resulting from this method appear to have caught some data reporting errors that weren't previously known, and therefore have greater confidence in the reliability of the reports. Aggregate statewide data is also available on the website to all districts for informational purposes.

Subindicator 1S1 – Secondary Academic Attainment

Measurement Approach: Completion of credits (4 language & 2 mathematics) by vocational concentrators who have left the secondary education system during the reporting year.
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: This requirement reflects the state regulatory requirements for graduation from high school for the 2002-2003 school year. This will change in the next year. In order to receive a diploma in 2004 all students must pass a state exam, the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam that is based upon state adopted performance standards in reading, writing and mathematics, plus earn all credits required for graduation. The EED is collecting data to negotiate a revised baseline and improvement target when this exam becomes effective next year.

Subindicator 1S2 – Secondary Vocational Attainment

Measurement Approach: Completion of available sequence of vocational courses within the approved local program
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: Two issues will continue to affect the statewide reliability of this data during the reporting year. First, the EED worked with all school districts, the AWIB and postsecondary institutions to identify appropriate national occupational standards and assist local education agencies and institutions to revise and align their curriculum to those standards as well as state academic standards. The realigned curriculum was the basis for identifying concentrators and completers, so that some changes have been made in sequences that identify concentrators and completers as well as course content.

Secondly, the definition of a program "completer" is district-specific and will not be standardized across the state because the variety of school settings within the state, i.e. large urban to "bush". Therefore programs that address the same set of standards may provide the necessary instruction over a greater or lesser amount of time; and some will have the capacity to achieve more advanced standards.

Subindicator 2S1 – Secondary Completion

Measurement Approach: State/Local Administrative Data, Graduation rate
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: The calculation method for reporting graduation rate was a simple division of the number of concentrators who received diplomas by the number of concentrators who were enrolled during that school year (i.e. July 1 through June 30) and had graduated or dropped out. Transferring students are counted by the receiving district and ignored by the sending district.

Subindicator 3S1 – Secondary Placement

Measurement Approach: Either local submission of administrative records for comparisons by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development or use of a state developed and locally administered survey of completers
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: Districts either reported their previous year's completers for an administrative record comparison by the DOL Research & Analysis section or conducted their own follow-up surveys and reported individual or aggregate results. Thirty-seven percent of the districts, representing 91% of the previous year's completers, submitted a list for comparison by DOL.

This year, the DOL/R&A was able to access the following sources of information: Alaska and Washington state UI wage records, US Department of Defense, US Office of Personnel Management, Alaska public assistance records and the National Student Clearinghouse. It is estimated that over two thirds of Alaskan secondary graduates pursue their postsecondary education out-of-state, at least initially. National wage record data access through WRIS is not currently allowed for Perkins reporting purposes.

Subindicator 4S1 – Secondary Nontraditional Enrollment

Measurement Approach: Local administrative data
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: Baseline information was developed using the 1990 U.S. Department of Labor information. During this program year, updated information was developed in cooperation with the state DOL Research & Analysis staff, using the CIP 2000 document. Local course information was updated according to these lists, and reliability of the 2002-2003 data reports was good.

Subindicator 4S2 – Secondary Nontraditional Completion

Measurement Approach: Local administrative data
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: See response to 4S1.

Subindicator 1P1 – Postsecondary Academic Attainment

Measurement Approach: Completion of reading, writing and mathematics requirements for program
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: Vocational students passing remedial courses in academic areas, students passing academic courses within degree or certificate programs, and students who earn degrees or one-year certificates are being counted within the University system. It does not capture instruction for these academic skills that is imbedded in some vocational courses nor does it document students who are found to meet the required English and mathematics competencies as they begin the vocational program and do not require additional coursework.

Special population data is incomplete for all postsecondary measures; even if self-disclosed elsewhere within the University system, it is not shared because of confidentiality.

Subindicator 1P2 – Postsecondary Vocational Attainment

Measurement Approach: Meet local standards and assessments
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: Within the UA system, it is not possible to collect data on students within credentialing sequences, as opposed to students who are in degree or certificate programs. Consequently, to approximate this measure, students who have successfully

completed 9 credits of vocational courses are considered to have met the vocational attainment measure.

Subindicator 2P1 – Postsecondary Degree or Credential

Measurement Approach: Attain degree, certificate, or credential
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: The method envisioned to capture students attaining credentials has not worked. While the credentialing sequences within the University system have been identified, the ability to count students participating and completing these sequences has been unattainable. Consequently, as a means of capturing at least some of these credential-seeking students, the UA data process includes students who complete 15 or more vocational credits within a measurement year.

According to postsecondary instructors, many students who enroll in multiple vocational courses within a program do not formally enroll in that program, and leave when their short-term employment objective of a new job or promotion is met.

Subindicator 3P1 – Postsecondary Placement

Measurement Approach: Administrative records matched with employment records, military or enrollment in further education
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: Administrative records from the University and the postsecondary vocational and technical centers were matched with employment records and military records by the Research and Analysis Section of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL). Collection of Perkins data is coordinated with data DOL must collect for legislative reports. The legislative reports report on program "exiters" and do not have a category of "concentrators". Because of the differing legislative requirements, data collection cannot be completely synchronized. However, generally speaking, the data for one report is often a subset, with an identifying tag, of the data for the other report.

The R&A Section belongs to the National Student Clearinghouse but continues to be prohibited from using the Wage Record Interchange System for Perkins. The ability to use it would presumably improve our performance on this measure.

Subindicator 3P2 – Postsecondary Retention

Measurement Approach: Administrative records matched with employment records, military or enrollment in further education.
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: See discussion for 3P1, above.

Subindicator 4P1 – Postsecondary Nontraditional Enrollment

Measurement Approach: Administrative data of nontraditional gender enrollment in courses within traditional programs
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: Postsecondary providers identified nontraditional vocational and technical programs based upon an EED-supplied list of nontraditional programs, based upon data provided by the U.S. Department of Labor. Program participants of the nontraditional gender were then identified and reported by the University system and the local postsecondary vocational centers. This process should provide good data for this measure.

Subindicator 4P2 – Postsecondary Nontraditional Completion

Measurement Approach: Administrative data of nontraditional gender completion of identified traditional programs.
Data quality discussion and improvement activities: This data represents a subset of Subindicators 4P1 and 2P1.

d. Effectiveness of Improvement Strategies in Previous Program Year

Summarize the planned improvement strategies for each subindicator. This summary should address the State's policies and procedures that are proposed to close the achievement gap for its vocational students, decrease bureaucracy and increase flexibility for local programs, increases options for parents and students and focus federal funding in those vocational programs, services and activities that are proven to increase student achievement.

Provide a brief narrative on these strategies. The brief narrative should address the following major questions as they relate to the approved state plan activities.

- *What activities were completed?*
- *To what extent did the planned expenditures impact and support these activities?*
- *What results were achieved from these activities for all students or targeted populations?*
- *What were the impacts (or are the expected impacts) on the core subindicator for all students or targeted populations?*
- *What are the implications for planning or revising improvement strategies for next program year?*

Subindicator 1S1: Academic Attainment, and Subindicator 1S2: Vocational and Technical Skill Attainment

In addition to meeting local credit requirements, all three sections of the new High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE) must be passed by the year 2004 seniors in order to be awarded a diploma. Per Alaskan statute, students who do not pass all sections of the HSGQE but earn the required credits will receive a "Certificate of Achievement". To support the success of vocational concentrators and completers, state policy has required local vocational & technical education curricula to be aligned by the end of this reporting year with nationally-recognized industry standards as well as incorporating instruction or reinforcement of the appropriate state reading, writing and math standards that are necessary for students to succeed in the vocational program.

EED continued to partner with teams of local educators to train local educators in the development of these aligned crosswalks of industry based standards with state content and performance standards, employability and cultural standards. Additionally, teams of local secondary and postsecondary teachers were established to review all curricula that had been completed by September 2002 and provide feedback to each local district. Recommendations were also developed for EED's future technical assistance and professional development planning.

EED onsite monitoring activities revealed that there is little consistency to report about teachers' preparation to teach to the updated standards. Some teachers conducted the alignments and sought additional training when needed. Some teachers did not exhibit measurable knowledge of the updated standards, and expressed little interest in related training. A revision of state policy will be reviewed to establish better incentives for participating in activities that upgrade teaching skills.

Subindicator 2S1: Secondary Completion

During this program year, districts and their teachers made a concentrated effort to understand and incorporate the state's required performance standards for reading, writing and math that were necessary for each vocational program. This effort will help teachers and students incorporate the connection of the academic standards to the industry standards upon which the program is based, in order to help the student better understand and meet the performance standard.

This core indicator is expected to be heavily impacted by this year's implementation of the HSGQE requirement for graduation. Data collected to this point does not provide sufficient information to predict its effect on CTE concentrators, either separately or as a part of the general secondary population.

Subindicator 3S1: Secondary Placement

Unduplicated placement data appears to be improving. The DOL/R&A has collaborated with EED to conduct the secondary record exchange for employment and postsecondary education, and has been very

helpful in identifying sources of data for postsecondary special populations. Postsecondary placement data is still incomplete, however, as access has not been approved for using the nation-wide WRIS database.

Subindicator 4S1 Non-Traditional Enrollment

Since the data indicates the State has exceeded projections regarding participants' preparation for and placement in nontraditional training and employment, standards-based professional development and support for direct services will continue to be the focus of these activities. Statewide comprehensive professional development will continue to provide techniques and strategies to enable teachers, counselors and administrators to help students overcome multiple barriers to success in nontraditional employment and to assist special populations in attaining and retaining high-skill, high wage jobs. School counselors will receive information necessary to help students consider and prepare for nontraditional careers, and to share related information with parents.

Subindicator 4S2: Non-Traditional Completion

School staffs have expressed a generalized concern that few nontraditional students enrolled in a vocational & technical education program complete that program. A measurable approach to answering this question has not been completed in a systematic way and therefore the question remains.

Subindicator 1P1: Academic Attainment

Improvements in the area of Academic Attainment tend to vary on a campus by campus basis. For example, AVTEC implemented a Foundations program designed to help high-risk students with their academic skills as well as other areas, designed ultimately to improve student success and completion. Tanana Valley Campus' exploration of changes to the science curriculum to increase the success of underprepared students in accessing core science classes provides another example.

Subindicator 1P2: Vocational and Technical Skill Attainment

An offer was made to the University system to fund a project that would allow identification of students who had completed coursework that would lead to industry-recognized credentials. Two examples of such credentials are Certified Dietary Manager and Certified Medical Assistant. It was hoped that students completing such studies could be counted as having obtained their vocational and technical skills, in accord with our definition. However, the University did not engage this offer. They are, however, investigating the possibilities of tracking what they are calling Departmental Certificates, which would have the effect of capturing many of these students.

The alignment of programs with industry certified skill standards has continued to progress this past year as a number of programs have received approval from their respective industry certifying bodies. In line with that effort, considerable professional development occurred to enable instructors to meet the certification requirements.

Subindicator 2P1: Postsecondary Degree or Credential

The comments at 1P1 above apply here. Professional development activities to improve instructional capabilities for differing learning styles occurred on one campus, while another offered workshops on contextual instruction and learning.

Subindicator 3P1: Postsecondary Placement

The placement data appears to be as complete as it can be given the differing areas that must be searched and matched. The Research and Analysis sections does an excellent job of seeking out and matching available databases.

The closer alignment of the Career and Technical Education system to the needs of industry, through a variety of workforce development organizations and forums, should lead to increased placement. For example, the new radiologic technology program is a direct response to an industry need and should lead to excellent placement opportunities for its graduates.

Subindicator 3P2: Postsecondary Retention

The alignment of programs to allow transfer of credits between campuses should help to improve student retention. In the past year, the University system aligned its general education curriculum such that a credit taken at any of its campus's would apply in meeting the general education requirements at other campuses. Similarly, AVTEC and the University of Alaska Anchorage aligned their automotive programs, allowing a smooth transition from a one year program to a two year program. Such alignment is designed into new programs. It is more difficult to achieve with programs already in place. However, an effort to align IT programs is being done.

Subindicator 4P1 Non-Traditional Enrollment

New strategies were not developed, as had been envisioned in last year's report.

Subindicator 4P2: Non-Traditional Completion

See 4P1.

e. Improvement Strategies for Next Program Year

Provide a brief narrative for each subindicator on the proposed improvement strategies for the next program year. The narrative should be based on the State Performance Summary (II a) and the Effectiveness of Improvement Strategies (II d) in the previous program years.

Subindicator 1S1: Academic Attainment

Program improvement strategies continue to be focused on two areas: identification of the academic performance standards that are congruent with student success in each program area and incorporating these standards into curricula and instructional planning, and providing high quality professional development through a variety of formats to vocational teachers to build their capacity to assure all students will meet the reading, writing and math performance standards. Efforts are continuing to involve recently retired teachers who have been involved in the development and refining of the Alaskan performance standards that are contained in the HSGQE.

Subindicator 1S2: Vocational and Technical Skill Attainment

During the reporting year, 504 individuals were reported to have taught one or more CTE courses during the school year. Less than 50 percent of the teachers in all CTE program areas had the appropriate state content endorsement for their area(s). This data, however, is incomplete: it does not include any industry-sponsored credentials or licenses; it may represent teachers who are qualified for part of their assignment, but not others; and it is not possible to translate this information into data that describes the number or percentage of students who were taught by a potentially under qualified teacher. Generally, it appears that significant needs exist for quality professional development, and in many areas and many locations but not to an efficacious extent.

Program improvement strategies continued to be focused on two areas: identification and incorporation of the industry based skills performance standards into curricula and instructional planning, and providing high quality professional development through a variety of formats to vocational teachers to build their capacity to assure all students will meet the appropriate vocational performance standards. When possible, local teachers will be supported to obtain the industry recognized training that allows their students to qualify for industry recognized certification or credentialing. The EED is working with the postsecondary programs, the AWIB and, when available, industry-based consortia to identify the appropriate standards and/or certificate that are desired by Alaskan businesses and promote standards-based articulation among secondary, postsecondary and, when available, apprenticeship programs.

In addition to program improvement efforts, program data collection methods will be reviewed to ensure they reflect the revised program and course descriptions during monitoring visits. Information gained during these visits will be discussed with the state's research analysts to determine whether the last two years' curriculum revision process has affected the measurement for this core indicator.

Subindicator 2S1: Secondary Completion

The high stakes consequences of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam will be effective for the seniors of 2004. Additional benchmark testing is being supported to help students learn and address their strengths and weaknesses early in their public school career. CTE programs will be working with NCLB toward improving the academic skills of secondary students, particularly in schools that are not demonstrating adequate yearly progress.

Subindicator 3S1: Secondary Placement

Challenges remain to reporting valid and reliable placement data. The administrative matches for postsecondary education have substantially improved with the use of the National Student Clearinghouse as the majority of Alaskan students go out of state for postsecondary education. The employment data from Alaska and Washington appears to capture a significant number but efforts will continue to gain access to nation-wide databases as there are not large enough numbers in any one state to justify the expense of developing separate agreements each state. Additional work will be done with districts to determine if their follow-up information can provide more information about any significant subgroups for planning purposes.

Subindicator 4S1 Non-Traditional Enrollment

A new list of non-traditional occupations was obtained from USDOL. These lists were aligned to CIP codes and made available on the Department website. CTE course lists from school districts were aligned to the non-traditional lists and school districts were provided with a list of all their courses and whether or not they were considered non-traditional. Districts will be required to update their data collection procedures to reflect this updated information.

Professional development will focus on equipping secondary and postsecondary educators, career counselors and administrators with techniques and strategies to proactively recruit students for high-skill, high wage jobs nontraditional for their gender. Since Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development data indicates women earn significantly less than men in comparable occupations statewide, and since Welfare Reform initiatives result in more single parents with poor occupational skills working in low-paying jobs, these activities will also focus on the comprehensive employment needs of females and economically disadvantaged families. To focus on student success and comply with Federal and statewide anti-discrimination law, training will be provided to help reduce and eliminate bias in instruction and assessment in secondary and postsecondary standards-based vocational education programs.

Subindicator 4S2: Non-Traditional Completion

Two issues need to be addressed. The first item will quantify and clarify the differences between nontraditional and traditional students in these programs. A number of questions have been proposed: What percentage of all students enrolled in a vocational program complete that program, and how does the number of nontraditional students compare? Are there particular barriers that nontraditional students face in these instances that could be resolved by counseling, teacher training or parent education? Strategies for improvement will vary depending upon local responses to these questions. Professional development for staff will also review areas with indicated growth potential, including apprenticeships. Incorporating non-traditional issues into already existing, skills-based professional development would be one option. Another would be offering teacher and counselor self-evaluations and assessments over the internet with accompanying online suggestions for improvement.

Subindicator 1P1: Academic Attainment

This subindicator seems to be working well. Improvement strategies will consist of inquiry to ensure the academic courses needed for completion of Departmental Certificate programs will be counted, should the University system develop the capability to track those students and programs.

Subindicator 1P2: Vocational and Technical Skill Attainment

Program improvement will continue to foster articulation between secondary and postsecondary and support of industry based skill standards. This will be congruent with the effort of the AWIB to ensure that all WIA funded training leads to industry certified skills.

Without the ability to include students who are seeking credentialing and not a degree or one-year certificate, it will be difficult to demonstrate improved performance in this area.

The list of vocational courses, upon which this measure as well as the enrollment and concentrator data is based, is being updated by the university system.

Subindicator 2P1: Postsecondary Degree or Credential

The current data collection process is able to identify persons who complete one-year certificate or two-year degree programs within the UA system. However, the goal of counting persons who have completed the sequences to allow them to attain credentials has turned out to be not feasible. This issue will continue to be discussed with the UA system; the current methodology is expected to continue.

Programmatically, the continuing increase of articulation between secondary and postsecondary systems, and also between apprenticeship programs and the educational systems, offers smoother paths to completion for students.

Subindicator 3P1: Postsecondary Placement

The ability to track placement and retention is facilitated by the excellent matching capabilities of the Research and Analysis Section. This past year saw an improvement through the addition of the National Student Clearinghouse information. Improved Alaskan data continues to depend upon needed cooperation at the federal level that will allow the use of the Wage Record Interchange System for the tracking of Perkins placement.

Given the limited personnel resources available, coordination of data collection and production with the state's other required vocational training reports will continue to be necessary. It continues to be a concern that the definitions and data tables for one report do not contaminate the data processes for the other.

Subindicator 3P2: Postsecondary Retention

See 3P1 above. The effort to align institutions and agencies into a system, providing increased student access to career and technical education and smoother transitions from one institution to another, continues. This past year, a Vocational Technical Education Providers group met and developed a memorandum of understanding designed to increase the cooperation and the building of a state system of career and technical education. This is an on-going group working on a number of cooperative projects and issues.

Subindicator 4P1 Non-Traditional Enrollment

It is not clear at this time what new improvement strategies will be. On the grantee side, it continues to be a required element.

Subindicator 4P2: Non-Traditional Completion

Any clarification in counting completers (see 2P1 above) could be expected to have an impact on this measure as well. Continued work with WIA partners to maximize occupational training and support services for nontraditional students will increase economic self-sufficiency after program completion.

Glossary of Acronyms used in this report

AKCIS – Alaska Career Information System

AWIB – Alaska Workforce Investment Board

CTSO – Career and Technical Student Organizations

DOL – Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

EED – Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

HSGQE – High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (Alaskan requirement)

NCIS – National Career Information System

NCLB – No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

OASIS – Online Alaska Student Information System

OVAE – Office of Vocational and Adult Education (U.S. Department of Education)

Perkins III – Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998

R & A – Research and Analysis section of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

SSN – Social Security Number

UA – University of Alaska

UI – Unemployment Insurance

USED – United States Department of Education

WIA – Workforce Investment Act of 1998

WRIS – Wage Record Interchange System